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Authority 969000
By [initials] Date 7/7/02



PO 23-8 IRAN
Department of State **TELEGRAM**

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 814

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 00668 241636Z

53

ACTION NEA-15

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-04 NSAE-00

NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 NIC-01 CU-04

O-03. OPR-02 SY-03 EUR-20 AID-28 OC-06 PC-04 RSR-01

/153 W

033461

R 24140Z FEB 70
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 382
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
CINCSTRIKE
AMEMBASSY LONDON UNN
ZEN/AMEMBASSY RAWALPINDI UNN

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PASS TO DOD

SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATIONS CAUSE GOI TO CANCEL BUS FARE INCREASES

1. STUDENTS AND OTHER GROUPS IN TEHRAN DEMONSTRATED AND CLASHED WITH POLICE OVER THREE-DAY PERIOD FEB 21-23, IN PROTEST AGAINST INCREASED BUS COSTS. RECENTLY REVISED BUS ROUTES HAD RAISED AND EVEN DOUBLED COSTS FOR MANY PASSENGERS AND HAD CREATED WIDESPREAD GRUMBLING AND DISSATISFACTION WHICH NOT LIMITED TO STUDENTS.

2. DEMONSTRATIONS STARTED AFTERNOON FEB 21 AT TEHRAN UNIVERSITY

WHEN 200-300 STUDENTS ASSEMBLED INSIDE CAMPUS SHOUTING PROTESTS AGAINST BUS COMPANY AND REPORTEDLY CALLING FOR BUS BOYCOTT NEXT DAY.

3. FEB -2 SAW SIMILAR DEMONSTRATIONS AT PRACTICALLY ALL UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES IN TEHRAN. SEVERAL INCIDENTS OF STUDENTS STONING BUSES OCCURRED PLUS SOME CLASHES OUTSIDE CAMPUSES IN WHICH STUDENTS STONED AND WERE FIRMLY SUPPRESSED BY RIOT POLICE WHO, BY THIS TIME, OUT IN MODERATE FORCE IN UNIVERSITY AREAS.

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E.O. 12958, as amended
June 21, 2006



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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PAGE 02 TEHRAN 00668 241636Z

SOME
STUDENTS INJURED AND SOME ARRESTED. IN AFTERNOON ALL
UNIVERSITIES CLOSED.

4. FEB 23 CLASHES WITH POLICE OCCURRED AGAIN AT TEHRAN
UNIVERSITY AND OTHER SCHOOLS
AS WELL
AS ELSEWHERE IN CITY,
AS STUDENTS TRIED ENTER CAMPUSES, STONED BUSES, OR ORGANIZED
BOYCOTT
OF BUSES. GROUPS REMAINED SMALL AND DISPERSED AND
SEEMED TO BE SPONTANEOUS GATHERINGS, INVOLVING SOME HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS AND NON-STUDENTS. WE KNOW OF AT LEAST SIX SEPARATE
CLASHES WITH POLICE AND SAW EVIDENCE OF BROKEN GLASS FROM BUSES
STONED.

5. AFTERNOON FEB 23 GOI
BROADCAST AND PUBLISHED SHAH'S ORDER
THAT PM PERSONALLY INVESTIGATE BUS FARE PROBLEM. COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN BY PM MET IMMEDIATELY AND BY EARLY EVENING HAD ORDERED
RETURN TO PREVIOUS BUS ROUTES AND FARES. BY MORNING FEB 24 BUS
COMPANY AND SITUATION IN CITY BACK TO NORMAL, THOUGH TEHRAN AND
OTHER UNIVERSITIES REMAINED CLOSED AND WILL REPORTEDLY REMAIN SO
FOR SEVERAL DAYS TO ALLOW STUDENTS COOL OFF. ONCE DECISION MADE
CANCEL FARE RAISES TAKEN, PRESS SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY
WAS PERMITTED MENTION STUDENT PROTESTS AND STONING OF
BUSES, AND AP CORRESPONDENT ALLOWED FILE STORY OF EVENTS.

COMMENT: DEMONSTRATIONS, FIRST SINCE MID-1968, GIVE
EVERY APPEARANCE OF SPONTANEOUS REACTION TO SPECIFIC
ISSUE OF BUS COSTS, MATTER OF IMPORTANCE TO ALL CLASSES.
PUBLIC IRRITATION UNDOUBTEDLY ENHANCED BY NOT UNWARRANTED
IMAGE OF BUS COMPANY AS CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT. GOI'S
OWN RELATIVELY RESTRAINED RESPONSE PROBABLY DUE TO RECOG-
NITION GENUINE GRIEVANCE EXISTED AND LACK OF CLEAR POLICY
ON ISSUE WITHIN GOI. SOME STUDENT FRUSTRATION AT INABILITY
EXPRESS DISSENT ON OTHER ISSUES UNDOUBTEDLY FANNED THEIR
FEELINGS, THOUGH POLITICAL CONTENT OF DEMONSTRATIONS
(EXPRESSED IN OCCASIONAL ANTI-ISRAEL, IRAQ, US, AND GOI SIGNS
OR SHOUTS) WAS INSIGNIFICANT.

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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PAGE 03 TEHRAN 00668 241636Z

FACT ALL THIS TOOK PLACE WHILE SHAH OUT OF COUNTRY AND THAT
GOI DECISION TO REVERSE FIELD TAKEN AS RESULT SHAH'S INTER-
VENTION PROBABLY MEANS SHAH HAS NOT ONLY ESCAPED BEING HELD
RESPONSIBLE BUT ALSO ADDED MINOR LAURELS AS GUARDIAN OF
POPULAR INTEREST. PM'S IMAGE SUFFICIENTLY STRONG SO THAT
HIS POPULARITY WILL NOT SUFFER FROM THIS FRACAS. GP-3.
MACARTHUR

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